

MAT 300-01
Spring 2008

Paper #2

Due February 21.

600-800 words. The paper should be double-spaced and should follow other class guidelines for papers.

Compare and contrast “Old Babylonian” mathematics with the mathematics of the ancient Egyptians. Write your paper from the following perspective. You are a student from Egypt who has come to Babylon to study mathematics in 1600 BCE. You are a good mathematics student, but your background is in Egyptian mathematics. Discuss the similarities and differences you find and your reactions to them, and give specific examples. The different number systems are one of the differences you might discuss, but should not be the dominant theme in your paper. You may assume that the person reading the paper has a good working knowledge of the Egyptian mathematics contained in the Rhind Papyrus and Moscow Papyrus and an introductory knowledge of Babylonian mathematics. While you may want to include computations and diagrams, your paper should contain at least 600 words. The paper should be written from the perspective given above, not that of a 21st century historian of mathematics. You should find enough material in our class text (Katz) and our class discussions to write this paper without having to go to any additional references. Note that we will be discussing Babylonian mathematics in class on February 12, February 14, and perhaps February 19.. If you only use our text and your class notes, you do not need to list references. If you use any additional references, you should cite and properly list those.